

# SurveyLA

Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

## LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

**Context:** Public and Private Institutional Development, 1850-1980  
Government Infrastructure and Services, 1850-1980  
Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers, 1957-1970



*Prepared for:*

City of Los Angeles  
Department of City Planning  
Office of Historic Resources



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## **PREFACE**

This theme of Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers is a component of Los Angeles’s citywide historic context statement and provides guidance to field surveyors and others in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources relating to this category. Refer to [HistoricPlacesLA.org](http://HistoricPlacesLA.org) for information on designated resources associated with this theme as well as those identified through SurveyLA and other surveys.

## **CONTRIBUTOR**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This theme looks at a specific building type and at the site plan which contains it. The building type is the Branch City Hall, or Municipal Building, a government structure housing City services for a neighborhood or district. The site plan is that of the Administrative Center, a collection of government buildings which includes the Branch City Hall along with others – the library, the fire department, the police station – which also serve the neighborhood or district.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of a Branch City Hall, as one of several structures within a neighborhood Administrative Center, became popular after the end of the Second World War in 1945. The concept fit well with the needs of the city as it expanded in the next quarter century. It was during this time that sections such as the San Fernando Valley developed as automobile-based suburban residential districts. Existing neighborhood administrative facilities added new buildings, and new centers went up in developing districts. By 1970 the Administrative Centers with their Branch City Halls were for the most part complete in their initial form, and the following decades would be a period of enlargement and remodeling.

This quarter-century is divided into two periods. The first, from 1945 through 1956, was one of planning. The idea of the Branch City Hall, set alongside other City buildings in a neighborhood Administrative Center, was put forth and gained acceptance. The second period, from 1957 through 1970, was one of execution. It was during this time – the period of significance for the theme – when buildings went up and site plans carried out.

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<sup>1</sup> Some sources use the term “Administration Center” in place of “Administrative Center.” The second is more common and is used throughout this context statement.

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The initial focus, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, was on the Administrative Center as a site planning problem, rather than on the architecture of the individual buildings within the Center. Planners sought the proper arrangement of the buildings in their relationship to each other and to the street. There was a particular concern for parking in what were essentially suburban settings.

By the early 1950s planners had presented two concepts: one for small administrative centers in newer residential settings and the other for large centers in older built-up areas containing commercial as well as residential uses. The smaller centers were linear in form, with the buildings set alongside each other facing the street and parking provided either between or behind buildings. The larger centers, in contrast, were to be arranged around a central pedestrian space and parking relegated to the periphery, separating the clustered buildings from the surrounding streets.

These two planning concepts – the linear and the concentrated – were carried out once construction began in the late 1950s. Attention then turned to the appropriate design for a Branch City Hall. The issue was of central concern to architects – how could the civic role of a government building be expressed in the Postwar Modernism of the period. The examples presented illustrate the ways in which designers dealt with this issue.

#### **Evaluation Considerations:**

The theme of Post WWII Administrative Centers may overlap with other themes relating to Government Infrastructure and Services including Municipal Fire Stations. Resources evaluated under this theme may also be significant within the Postwar Modernism theme of the LA Modernism sub-context of the Architecture and Engineering context.



*Dedication of Municipal Building, 1957  
Sunland-Tujunga Administrative Center  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

## **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The focus of this theme is on the postwar period. But the idea of a neighborhood City Hall goes back to the 1920s. Like the postwar years, this was an era of rapid population growth and increasing automobile use. Outlying districts had need for services convenient to their residents and the City responded by constructing notable structures. While the architecture and site planning differed markedly from that of the 1950s, the purpose was much the same.

### **The Prewar Branch City Halls – San Pedro and Van Nuys**

The Branch City Hall or Municipal Building first appeared in neighborhoods that were once themselves independent cities. As these cities consolidated with Los Angeles, their existing City Halls became local offices for their new municipal government. Two of these are Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments – Eagle Rock City Hall (No. 59) and Venice City Hall (No. 749).<sup>2</sup> But in the late 1920s and early 1930s the City built two new neighborhood City Halls that used the historically-based styles of the time to present a monumental presence in an outlying district.

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<sup>2</sup> Extant also is Tujunga's Bolton Hall (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 2), discussed below. Others, such as facilities for Watts, Wilmington, and Hollywood, have been demolished.

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The first (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 732) was in San Pedro, which also began as an independent city serving the adjacent harbor. By the mid-1920s it was apparent that the pre-consolidation City Hall was inadequate. In planning its replacement, the City dealt with the issue of what a neighborhood municipal building should be. The result was a single large structure that was monumental in appearance, urban in setting, and multi-purpose in function.

The San Pedro Municipal Building was begun in late 1927 and completed in late 1928. The plans for the new building of granite and buff brick over a steel frame were apparently drawn by the City's Department of Public Works. In form it resembled a Renaissance Revival office block from the period, filling the site to the property line with no provision for parking or landscaping. The ground level housed the police and fire departments. Above that were the numerous traditional functions, such as the City Clerk and Municipal Court, as well as a receiving hospital and harbor offices. The County also rented space for its branch offices.<sup>3</sup>



*San Pedro Municipal Building, 1927-1928  
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 732  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The second was the Valley Municipal Building (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 202) in Van Nuys, located to serve the San Fernando Valley. Like San Pedro, the Valley was considered remote. It had been annexed to the city in 1915, two years after the arrival of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. But it was not

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<sup>3</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 1927, January 9, 1928, September 4, 1928, November 11, 1928; Sanborn Map, Volume 19, 1912/1950, Sheet 1928.

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commonly considered part of the metropolis, accessible only by a winding road and the Pacific Electric interurban rail line through the Cahuenga Pass.

Anticipation of future growth, combined with remoteness, justified a Branch City Hall. Its monumental design by architect Peter K. Schabarum presented an image meant to recall the new Downtown City Hall. Two-story wings flanked a central tower of eight stories to create an H-shaped footprint. Its style combined the Art Deco of the 1920s with the PWA Moderne of the 1930s. Construction was approved in March of 1929 and completed in February of 1933.<sup>4</sup>



*Valley Municipal Building, 1929-1933  
L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 202  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

As with San Pedro, Van Nuys combined various functions into a single large structure. It housed the police department, the receiving hospital and health department, the city clerk and civil service departments, the building and safety departments, and municipal courtrooms and judges' chambers. The basement contained a garage, but there was no apparent provision for surface parking.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Herr, editor, *Landmark L.A.: Historic-Cultural Monuments of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, 2002), 437; *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1929, February 13, 1933; February 22, 1933

<sup>5</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 1931, February 13, 1933; Van Nuys Sanborn Map, 1926/1948, Sheet 9.

## **Postwar Demographic and Architectural Change**

The depression years of the 1930s and the war years of the early 1940s severely limited the private construction of new neighborhoods. Only defense-related development, beginning at the end of the 1930s in districts such as Westchester and the eastern San Fernando Valley, provided new housing. But once the war ended in 1945, merchant builders responded to the demand for new homes. Significant among these early postwar developments is the Mar Vista tract in Palms, a designated Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (historic district).

This postwar growth, based on widespread ownership of the automobile, was most evident in the central and western portions of the San Fernando Valley. The initial section of the Hollywood Freeway through the Cahuenga Pass had been opened before the war, and housing for defense workers brought an early increase in population. In the late 1940s General Motors opened its Van Nuys assembly plant and other industries followed.

During the fifties, tracts of housing filled the still-vacant land west of Van Nuys. With the completion of the Ventura, San Diego, and Golden State Freeways by the end of the 1960s, the Valley reached maturity as the premier middle-class residential district of Los Angeles. In the process it produced such notable examples of tract housing as Balboa Highlands in Granada Hills, a designated Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

This postwar growth created a need for City buildings. But architects faced a problem. As Modernism came to dominate the postwar period, they rejected use of historically-based styles as a means of conveying the importance of the City. This presented an issue – how could municipal government be represented without reliance on traditional architecture?

One example held up as a model was the Fresno City Hall of 1941. It was designed by Ernest J. Kump, a noted California modernist active in the Central Valley and the Bay Area, in partnership with Charles Franklin.<sup>6</sup> The *Architectural Forum* in 1944 called it “more than just another good modern building.” This “small and unpretentious” structure is “a distinguished building.” As “a total break with the usual massive and pedantic municipal architecture, it shows the way to public structures of beauty and utility.”<sup>7</sup>

Specifically, the Fresno City Hall followed the dictates of the International Style of the 1930s in horizontal massing, ribbon windows, and a lack of applied ornament. But it broke with International Style orthodoxy in its use of brick rather than stucco for the exterior. A somewhat symmetrical plan was used, primarily because it allowed for clarity of internal circulation, but the entrance was placed off-

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<sup>6</sup> Ernest Kump, “Town and City Halls,” *Forms and Functions of Twentieth-Century Architecture*, Volume III, edited by Talbot Hamlin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 805-810.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Kump, “Town and City Halls,” in *Forms and Functions of Twentieth-Century Architecture*, Volume III, 805.

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center. The entrance itself, with its glass-enclosed lobby, provided monumentality through its contrasting scale and materials, rather than through the use of historically derived forms.<sup>8</sup>



*Fresno City Hall, 1941  
(Photo by author)*

Closer in time, location, and size to the postwar Branch City Halls was the combined library and courthouse built by Los Angeles County in the city of San Fernando. Completed in the early 1950s, it was referred to as a Branch Civic Center. San Fernando was one of several such branches, with others planned for Downey, Huntington Park, and Santa Monica. They were part of a thirty-two million dollar construction program enacted to provide facilities, ranging from sheriff's stations to psychiatric hospitals, to serve the County's growing population.<sup>9</sup>

The San Fernando Civic Center shared with the Fresno City Hall its horizontality, brick construction, and absence of historic detailing. But it showed how Fresno's design could be adapted to a smaller facility. It was single story rather than two, and its asymmetry was accentuated by separate massing for the various sections. A feature that will also appear in some of the Branch City Halls was the canopy, which continued beyond the entrances to cover the windows and further stressed horizontality.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Kump, "Town and City Halls," in *Forms and Functions of Twentieth-Century Architecture*, Volume III, 806-810.

<sup>9</sup> Plans were completed in 1950 (see *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1950). Sources differ as to its date of completion. One gives it as 1950 (see *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1956), while another maintains that it was dedicated in 1952 (see the description accompanying the photograph "'Shaggy dog' disappears," Order Number 00124947, Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library).

<sup>10</sup> The building is still intact, although altered by the addition of a ramp across the front.



*Los Angeles County Branch Civic Center, circa 1950  
919 First Street, San Fernando  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Both the Fresno City Hall and the San Fernando facility illustrate design features that will be used in the Branch Municipal Buildings. But constructing them had to wait until the later 1950s, as the city's citizens proved reluctant to spend the money. Instead, attention focused on planning for the day when the funds would be forthcoming.

### **Early Planning Efforts, 1945-1956**

The City recognized the need for neighborhood facilities of all types – police, fire, libraries, and recreation – soon after the war ended, and sought public support to finance them. It turned out that the public was willing to spend money for most of these needs, but not – at least initially – for Branch City Halls. In 1947 the City put a twelve-million-dollar capital improvements bond request on the ballot. It included almost two million dollars for Branch City Halls, with the remainder going to fire stations, playgrounds, police stations, health facilities, and sewers. All but the City Hall segment received the needed two-thirds approval.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the failure, the City continued to plan for neighborhood Municipal Buildings. In doing so, they broke with the prewar model of a single large structure housing various branches of City government. Instead, they accepted the idea of smaller separate structures, each housing a different function, assembled together in an Administrative Center. Smaller structures fit the suburban character of many of the sites. They also fit political reality, in that the different City services could build their individual facilities as they received funding.

Because of the multi-building nature of these Centers, site planning became the focus. During the next decade the City developed prototypical site layouts that were to be adopted when construction finally began. In February of 1950 the Los Angeles City Planning Commission issued a report entitled "Branch

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<sup>11</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1947, May 29, 1947.

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Administrative Centers” which described the need and provided site plans. While not officially adopted, it illustrated the ideas for what came into being by the end of the decade.<sup>12</sup>

The report began by noting that Los Angeles in 1950 had the “double distinction” of being both “the largest city in area of the entire world,” as well as being the “fastest growing major city in the United States.” The prediction was that the estimated population was already over two million and would approach three million within twenty years. This population growth, combined with the geographical expanse of the city, required thinking beyond the traditional concept of centralized municipal government.<sup>13</sup>

The commonly accepted idea of a single Civic Center made sense for most cities. But, according to the report, Los Angeles, given its “unique topographical features” as well as its geographic expanse and its growing population, was best thought of as “metropolitan area in itself” instead of as a traditional city. As such, the “component units of the mother city” should be seen as cities in their own right, entitled to their own local institutions.<sup>14</sup>

The conclusion was that each of these city-like districts deserved “a grouping of related public buildings in a well-planned, integrated branch administrative center” which would “promote economy, efficiency, convenience, attractiveness, and civic pride.”<sup>15</sup> The report noted that these Branch Administrative Centers would have a double purpose – make services more convenient to local residents and make it easier for city workers, such as building inspectors, to carry out their duties. These neighborhood centers would also relieve an already overburdened Downtown, where space for city workers was limited and parking for visitors difficult.<sup>16</sup>

The investigative work on planning for these neighborhood centers had begun soon after the end of the war in 1945. Studies of alternative sites started in 1946 and were considered one year later by a Coordinating Board composed of the Mayor and principal department heads. In discussing these projects, the Board proposed that in some cases City structures should be joined by County, State, and Federal facilities to create larger centers.<sup>17</sup>

The result was a recommendation for twelve Branch Administrative Centers. The study differentiated between two kinds of centers – major and minor. The major Centers should have a Municipal Building along with separate structures for functions such as a regional library and municipal courts. Minor Centers should contain facilities for local service such as a branch library, police station, and fire

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<sup>12</sup> A copy of the report is in the reference collection of the Social Science division of the Central Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library.

<sup>13</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Branch Administrative Centers,” dated February 1950, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 6.

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department.<sup>18</sup> Among the major Centers, some were “of greater importance” than others. “Van Nuys, for example, will be second only to the main Civic Center in Downtown Los Angeles,” serving as “the principle center for the entire San Fernando Valley.”<sup>19</sup>

Planners tried to place new Centers within easy traveling distance for neighborhood residents. A minor Center should serve those living within a radius of two miles. Those driving could reach the Center in five or ten minutes and those relying on public transit within less than half an hour. This meant that recommended sites were close to major traffic arteries and well served by one or more transit lines. This also meant that the proposed plans provided off-street parking for both workers and visitors.<sup>20</sup>

Where facilities existed – West Los Angeles and Van Nuys in particular – the plan proposed enlarging the current sites. But new sites were needed in rapidly growing districts without facilities. The planners identified two such districts in particular. One was the San Fernando Valley, for which they proposed a new major Center in Canoga Park to supplement the existing Van Nuys facility. The other was Westchester, for which a minor Center was laid out.<sup>21</sup>

Significant variations from the unadopted 1950 plan took place once construction began six years later – such as the substitution of Reseda in place of Canoga Park for the West Valley Center and the inclusion of a Municipal Building in Westchester. But its site plans were followed in concept. Two general schemes were used. One was linear, with all the facilities placed alongside each other and facing the street. This was common for the smaller Centers. The other was centralized around a plaza or mall, with the various structures having their primary entrances facing this public space. This was typical for larger Centers.

Five neighborhood Administrative Centers with Branch City Halls – completed between 1957 and 1970, or well underway by then – illustrate these two schemes. The first three – Sunland-Tujunga, Reseda, and Westchester – were totally new smaller Centers that followed the linear pattern. The last two – West Los Angeles and Van Nuys – were larger Centers adjoining existing facilities and oriented around a central space. West Los Angeles received a new Municipal Building in place of its existing structure, while Van Nuys integrated its historic Branch City Hall into a new central mall.

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<sup>18</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Branch Administrative Centers,” dated February 1950, 6-7. Major centers were proposed for Van Nuys, Hollywood, West Los Angeles, Venice, San Pedro, Canoga Park, Sunland-Tujunga, Jefferson (Jefferson Boulevard east of Crenshaw Boulevard), and Watts. Minor centers were proposed for North Hollywood, Eagle Rock, and Westchester.

<sup>19</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Branch Administrative Centers,” dated February 1950, 6.

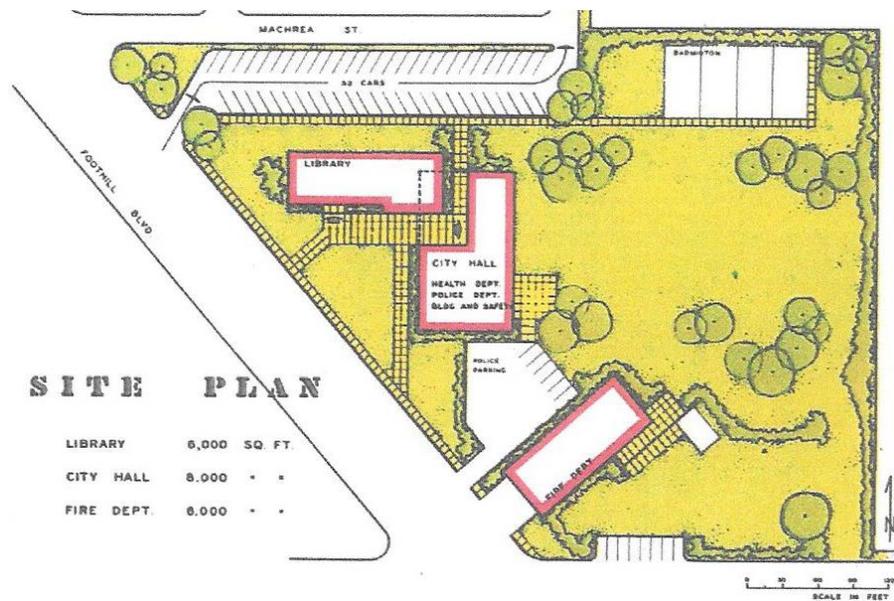
<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 7-8

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

### Linear Administrative Centers – Sunland-Tujunga

Both Sunland and Tujunga were small, well established communities that expected to grow in the early postwar period as the undeveloped area between them filled. Municipal services were housed in Tujunga’s Bolton Hall (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 2), a clearly inadequate facility for this purpose as it was built in 1913 as a community meeting space. The site for the new Administrative Center, along Foothill Boulevard halfway between the older sections of Sunland and Tujunga, was a vacant City-owned plot originally occupied by a sanatorium. The surrounding residential streets were perhaps half filled with homes in 1950.<sup>22</sup>

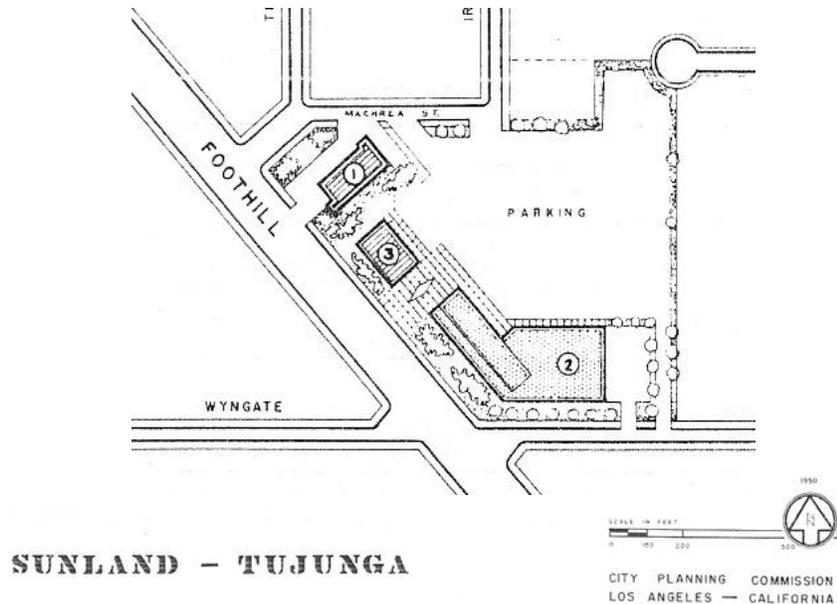
An early proposal for a neighborhood Center on this site was apparently part of the unsuccessful effort to generate support for the 1947 bond issue. The proposal is notable for the way in which the Library and City Hall are related architecturally, set back at an angle to form a shared triangular entrance court with a path between them leading to the public parking lot. Also notable is the incorporation of a park complete with badminton courts.



*Plan for Sunland-Tujunga Administrative Center, 1947  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

The plan presented in the 1950 report is similar to that of 1947 in calling for three structures – a Fire Station, a Library, and a Municipal Building – arranged in a linear pattern along Foothill Boulevard. But the sequence of the buildings is changed, with the Library in the center, the Fire Station to the north, and the Municipal Building to the south. The park is gone.

<sup>22</sup> The density of the existing neighborhood is shown in Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Branch Administrative Centers,” dated February 1950, 24; *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1956, December 16, 1956.



*Plan for Sunland-Tujunga Administrative Center, 1950  
1-Fire Station, 2-Municipal Building, 3-Library  
From Los Angeles City Planning Commission "Branch Administrative Centers"  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

With this rearrangement, the angular placement of the Library and Municipal Building is eliminated, as is any implied architectural relationship. All three are separate and face the street. Parking is placed in a large lot behind the three facilities. This plan was carried out by the late 1950s, with the only change being that parking was placed alongside rather than behind the Library and Municipal Building, thereby allowing for a park per the 1947 scheme.<sup>23</sup>

Of the three structures, the Municipal Building was the last to be completed. The Fire Station was first, opening in early 1951. The Library followed soon thereafter, with construction beginning in October of that year and completed in May of 1952. The Municipal Building did not join them until 1957. All three share a setback and a similarity in mass, but there was apparently no attempt to relate them architecturally. (The Fire Station, although enlarged, is generally intact. The 1952 Library has been replaced with a new structure.)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, "Branch Administrative Centers," dated February 1950, 24-25. The reordering of the lineup may have been due to the fact that planning for the fire station at the north end was underway when the 1950 report was issued.

<sup>24</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1951, October 4, 1951, March 10, 1957, March 17, 1957; Certificate of Occupancy for Library, dated May 18, 1952, at Search Online Building Records at [www.ladbs.org](http://www.ladbs.org) at Search Online Building Records at [www.ladbs.org](http://www.ladbs.org), accessed March 2019.

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*Sunland-Tujunga Administrative Center, circa 1960  
From the left: Fire Station, Library, Municipal Building  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

Funding for planning the Municipal Building came in the Spring of 1955. The construction contract was awarded in June of 1956. It was planned to house the police department as well as a branch office of the City Clerk. It was also to contain offices for the local councilman and a community room. Although altered with a newer window-wall which encloses the original porch, the building is generally intact.<sup>25</sup>



*Current View of Municipal Building, 1957  
Sunland-Tujunga Administrative Center  
(Photo by author)*

The design, by the architectural firm of Davis, Haynes & Herberger, shares features with both the Fresno City Hall and the San Fernando Civic Center. Notable are the use of brick and the single-story asymmetric massing. Intact are such details as the tiled panel containing the name of the structure and the extension of the entrance canopy over the windows to the right, as well as the long “bezel” or projecting rim around these windows containing vertical louvers. Lost features include the glass surrounding the main entrance and the porch supported by pipe columns.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1955, May 4, 1955, June 3, 1956.

<sup>26</sup> Application to Construct New Building, dated March 6, 1956, at Search Online Building Records at [www.ladbs.org](http://www.ladbs.org), accessed March 2019. On the use of the “bezel” in the 1940s and 1950s see Paul Gleye, *The Architecture of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981), 148-152.



*Original Entrance, Municipal Building, 1957  
Sunland-Tujunga Administrative Center  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

### **Linear Administrative Centers – Reseda**

Although the construction of its Municipal Building took place at about the same time as that of Sunland-Tujunga, the site planning process for Reseda was different. The result, however, was similar. Originally, the West Valley Branch Administrative Center was to be in Canoga Park. Funding was finally secured in May of 1955. But rather than remaining in Canoga Park, in 1956 the City bought an open fourteen-acre plot in Reseda. The Municipal Building, the first facility to be built in the Center, was placed on the southeastern corner of Vanowen Street and Van Alden Avenue – facing a line of single-family residences constructed in 1949 – apparently without a pre-existing site plan for the ensemble.<sup>27</sup>



*Municipal Building under construction, with view of neighboring homes, 1956-1957  
West Valley Administrative Center, Reseda  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

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<sup>27</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1955, April 21, 1957, May 12, 1960. Construction dates of houses from Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Parcel Viewer, at [losangelescountyassessor.net](http://losangelescountyassessor.net), accessed March 2019. Further research may uncover the existence of a site plan.

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Like Sunland-Tujunga, the West Valley Municipal Building is a single-story brick structure, in this case designed by William R. Blakely, the director of the Bureau of Public Buildings. City offices such as engineering and street maintenance initially shared the building with a temporary branch of the public library. Construction began in July of 1956 and was completed in April of 1957.<sup>28</sup>

As with Sunland-Tujunga, the West Valley Municipal Building shares features of the Fresno City Hall and the San Fernando Civic Center. The massing is low and horizontal, with a general asymmetry countered by a dominant central entrance. Initially the brick was unpainted, and the contrast between the darker walls and the lighter, glass-enclosed entry followed the Fresno example. Providing a bit of monumentality is the abstracted colonnade to the left of the glass entry. The building has since been enlarged but the façade remains generally intact.



*Municipal Building, 1957  
West Valley Administrative Center, Reseda  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*



*Current view of Municipal Building, 1957  
West Valley Administrative Center, Reseda  
(Photo by author)*

The Municipal Building was the first in what would become a Branch Administrative Center, filling a site that would eventually occupy the full fourteen acres along Vanowen between Van Arden and Wystone Avenues. Plans for a Police Station were underway as early as July of 1956, with a Library to follow. A design for the Library, by architects Allison & Rible, was presented to the public in late 1958, and the

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<sup>28</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1956, April 7, 1957, April 21, 1957.

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facility completed in November of 1960. The facades of the two additional structures aligned with that of the Municipal Building in facing Vanowen. Completing the ensemble is West Valley Park, extending along Vanowen from the police facility to Wilbur Avenue. The Police building has been altered and the Library replaced.<sup>29</sup>



*Library (left, under construction) and Municipal Building (right), circa 1960  
West Valley Administrative Center  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

#### Linear Administrative Centers – Westchester

The 1950 plan called for a small Administrative Center in Westchester, to consist of a Library and a Health Center. This was to be built on a plot along the east side of the intersection of Sepulveda Eastway and Will Rogers Street (now Westchester Parkway). The site was selected because of its proximity to the Westchester shopping district one block to the east. Parking for the two facilities was to be provided in the lots along the west side of Sepulveda that also served the commercial district.<sup>30</sup>

Two things changed. First, the Administrative Center was moved to a more spacious open tract on the southeast corner of Manchester Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard. This entire plot of about twenty acres became today's Westchester Recreation Center and was developed as a co-operative effort among the bureaucracies of the Public Works Department, the Library, and Recreation and Parks. The Administrative Center occupies the northwestern corner of the park, while a Recreation Building is located on the northeastern corner. All structures faced Manchester Boulevard.<sup>31</sup>

Second to change was the substitution of a Municipal Building for the Health Center as a component of the Administrative Center. This appears to have been due to an effort by City Councilman L. E. Timberlake, who in March of 1954 introduced a motion before the City Council to this effect. By April of

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<sup>29</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1956, April 7, 1957, November 30, 1958, November 6, 1960.

<sup>30</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, "Branch Administrative Centers," dated February 1950, 34-35.

<sup>31</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1959.

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1957, an appropriation of approximately \$900,000 was made available for the Municipal Building and the Library, and planning began.<sup>32</sup>



*View of Municipal Building from Manchester Avenue, 1960  
Westchester Administrative Center  
(Photo by author)*



*Rendering of Municipal Building (right) and Library (left) with three-bay connecting canopy  
Westchester Administrative Center  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The same architects, James H. Garrott and Gregory Ain, designed the Library and the Municipal Building. Both architects are historically significant. Ain was one of the Second Generation pioneer Modernists influential in Southern California. He is best known for his homes, such as the 1939 Hay House (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 981), and small apartment buildings like the 1937 Dunsmuir Flats (L.A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 954). Particularly notable among Ain's postwar works is the Mar Vista tract of 1948. This project, a designated Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, consists of approximately fifty single-family homes, built as an effort to show that Modernist design was economically feasible for mass-produced speculative housing.<sup>33</sup>

James Homer Garrott was an African American architect, perhaps second only to Paul Revere Williams in professional importance at the time. Notable among his earlier works is the Golden State Mutual Life

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<sup>32</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1954, April 28, 1957.

<sup>33</sup> Application to Construct New Building, dated January 2, 1959, at Search Online Building Records at [www.ladbs.org](http://www.ladbs.org), accessed March 2019; Esther McCoy, *The Second Generation* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1984), 82-141.

## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

### Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers, 1957-1970

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Insurance Building of 1929, on South Central Avenue (L. A. Historic-Cultural Monument No. 580). He was the second African American, after Williams, to be admitted to the Los Angeles branch of the American Institute of Architects. His application in 1946 was sponsored by Williams and Ain.<sup>34</sup>



*Entrance to Municipal Building from Manchester Avenue, 1960  
Westchester Administrative Center  
(Photo by author)*



*View of Branch Library (demolished), 1960  
Westchester Administrative Center  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Municipal Building and the Library were planned to complement each other. The two together were referred to at the time as the Westchester Civic Center. The extant Municipal Building is a single story brick masonry structure, as was the now-demolished Library. The Municipal Building was placed on the right facing Manchester and the Library on the left. Each had its entrance set back from the primary mass, in a wing that projected into the space between the buildings. Connecting these entrances was a concrete canopy of shallow arches, with three of the arches creating a breezeway between the buildings.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Anthony Denzer, *Gregory Ain: The Modern Home as Social Commentary* (New York: Rizzoli, 2008), 221; David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *An Architectural Guide to Los Angeles*, Sixth Edition (Los Angeles: Angel City Press, 2018), 75.

<sup>35</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1959, January 22, 1961.

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*View of remaining two canopy arches and side of Municipal Building from rear parking lot  
Westchester Administrative Center  
(Photo by author)*

Two of the three connecting arches remain. This makes it possible to see how the provision of the breezeway allowed the approach from the rear parking lot to be as welcoming as that from Manchester. The importance of entering the Municipal Building from the rear was indicated by the provision of decorative arches over the side-facing windows. This respect for users parking in the rear, combined with the unified treatment of the two buildings, made the work of Garrott and Ain a notable example of the suburban Administrative Center as an architectural ensemble.

#### **Administrative Centers with Plazas/Malls – West Los Angeles**

The site chosen for the West Los Angeles Administrative Center already contained two City structures – a Municipal Building on the southeast corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Purdue Avenue and a Police Station just to the south on Purdue. The 1950 plan proposed keeping these two structures, and adding new buildings for a Library, Health Center, Water and Power, and Public Assistance. The land along the west side of Purdue and the two blocks between Purdue and Corinth from Santa Monica to Iowa Avenue would be acquired. Idaho Avenue would be closed between Corinth and Purdue, and an open space created at the rear of the existing Municipal Building.<sup>36</sup>

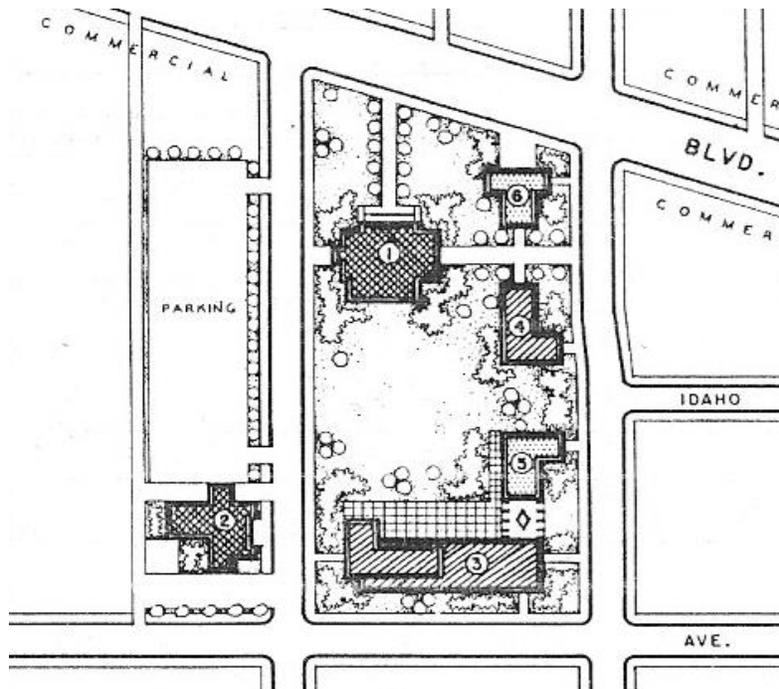
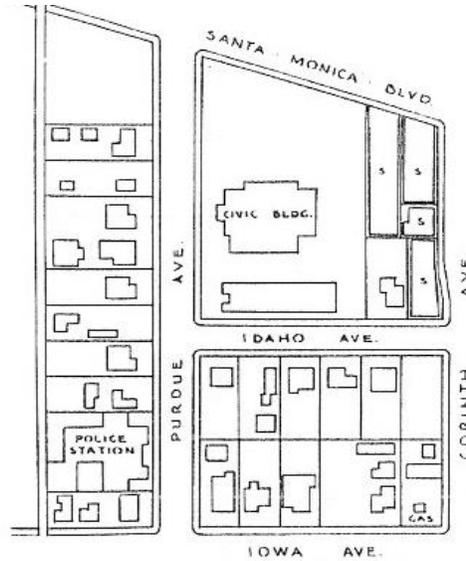
During the decade that followed, between 1950 and 1960, the concept of a plaza in place of Idaho between Corinth and Purdue remained, but the nature and location of the buildings changed. The process was gradual, with the completion of new structures before a final site plan was approved.

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<sup>36</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Branch Administrative Centers,” dated February 1950, 16-17.

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*Existing Conditions and Plan for West Los Angeles Administrative Center, 1950  
1-Existing Municipal Building, 2-Existing Police Department, 3-Health Center,  
4-Library, 5-Public Assistance, 6-Department of Water and Power  
From Los Angeles City Planning Commission "Branch Administrative Centers"  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

The first new building to appear was the Library. Construction began in January of 1956 and was completed in November of that year, more than three years before a new site plan was approved. The Library was placed in front of the existing Municipal Building on the southeast corner of Purdue and Santa Monica, and its main entrance faced Santa Monica, rather than any future plaza to the south. A

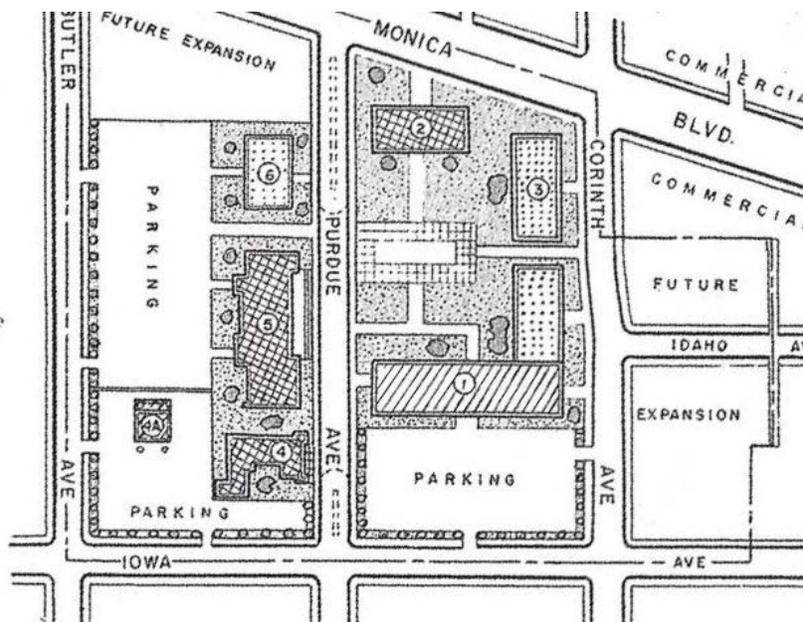
## SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement

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rendering published in the *Los Angeles Times* in January of 1956 shows the existing Municipal Building remaining.<sup>37</sup>

However, in 1958 the City began plans for a new Municipal Building to replace the existing structure behind the Library. A year later, in 1959, planning began for a new Senior Citizens Center and an expanded police facility. The County did the same for a new Courthouse. But it was not until February of 1960 that the City Council adopted a site plan for the complex.<sup>38</sup>

The approved 1960 site plan shows the new Municipal Building enclosing the south side of a plaza created by the closing of Idaho, with the rear of the Library on the north side and two future public buildings along the east side. Purdue Avenue is shut to through traffic, and the County Courthouse completes the west side of the plaza. Parking is provided in surface lots behind both the Municipal Building and the Courthouse.



*Site Plan for West Los Angeles Administrative Center, adopted February 1960*  
1-Municipal Building, 2-Library, 3-Future City Building, 4 & 4A Police,  
5-County Courthouse, 6-Future County Building  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)

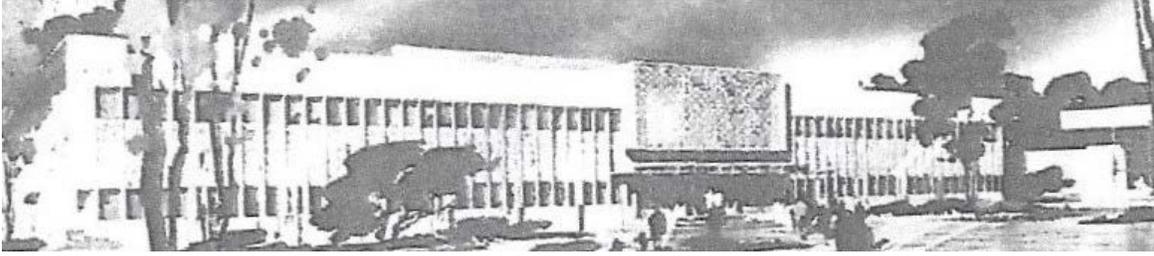
Development proceeded with this plan in mind. The Courthouse opened in 1960 and the Municipal Building in 1961. The Senior Citizens Recreation Center, completed in 1962, occupies the space designated for a future public building on the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Corinth Avenue.

<sup>37</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1956, November 4, 1956.

<sup>38</sup> Information provided by the Los Angeles Department of Planning; *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1958, February 15, 1959, April 5, 1959, April 26, 1959, June 4, 1961.

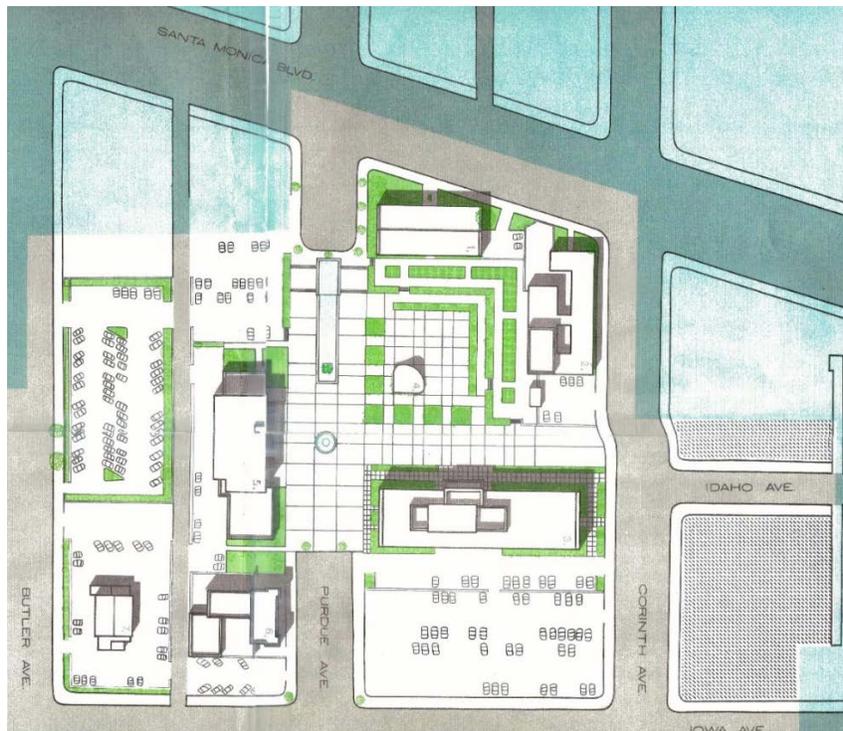
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*Rendering of Municipal Building, 1961  
West Los Angeles Administrative Center  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

But the nature of the open space in the center changed, as is shown in the updated site plan adopted in 1970. No building was constructed between the Recreation Center and the Municipal Building. Instead Idaho Avenue became an open east-west walkway with the Courthouse terminating its western end. North of this walkway a band shell defines a somewhat separate plaza. Purdue was upgraded from a closed-off street to a north-south walkway with a pond in its median. Additional parking took the place of a future County building to the north of the Courthouse.<sup>39</sup>



*Revised Site Plan for West Los Angeles Administrative Center, adopted in 1970  
(Courtesy of the Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

<sup>39</sup> "West Los Angeles Administrative Center Development Plan," adopted 1970, Department of City Planning and the Bureau of Public Buildings. The police station has been replaced by a parking lot and a new station built on the northwest corner of Butler and Iowa Avenues.

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### Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers, 1957-1970

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Together with the Courthouse, the 1961 Municipal Building dominates the complex, with the entire length of its façade paralleling the east-west walkway. The architect was Albert Criz, who also designed the Senior Citizens Recreation Center. Criz is best known for his work on the Mar Vista Gardens garden apartment housing project of 1954.<sup>40</sup>



*View of Municipal Building from Corinth Avenue, looking west toward the Courthouse  
West Los Angeles Administrative Center  
(Photo by author)*



*Entrance to Municipal Building from Band Shell Plaza  
West Los Angeles Administrative Center  
(Photo by author)*

For the Municipal Building, Criz created a large, formally composed Modernist design, similar to the Fresno City Hall, with a central entrance set slightly off-center on a uniform two-story office block. Differences between it and Fresno are the use of concrete rather than brick, the stress on the vertical in the window detailing, and the heavy treatment of the entrance, with its projecting upper story and canopy in place of Fresno's glass.

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<sup>40</sup> Application to Construct New Building," dated February 1959, at Search Online Building Records at [www.ladbs.org](http://www.ladbs.org), accessed March 2019; Entries for Albert Criz and Mar Vista Gardens, Los Angeles Conservancy website, accessed March 2019; *Los Angeles Times*, October 4, 1959, June 15, 1961.

### **Administrative Centers with Plazas/Malls – Valley/Van Nuys**

Van Nuys was different from West Los Angeles in two ways. The first was the fact that the historic 1932 Municipal Building remained, providing a focus for the central open space. The second was the scale. Van Nuys was much larger in area, making closing of streets and demolition of condemned structures more complicated. It also involved four layers of government – City, County, State, and Federal – rather than two, each with its own idea of when and where it wanted to build.

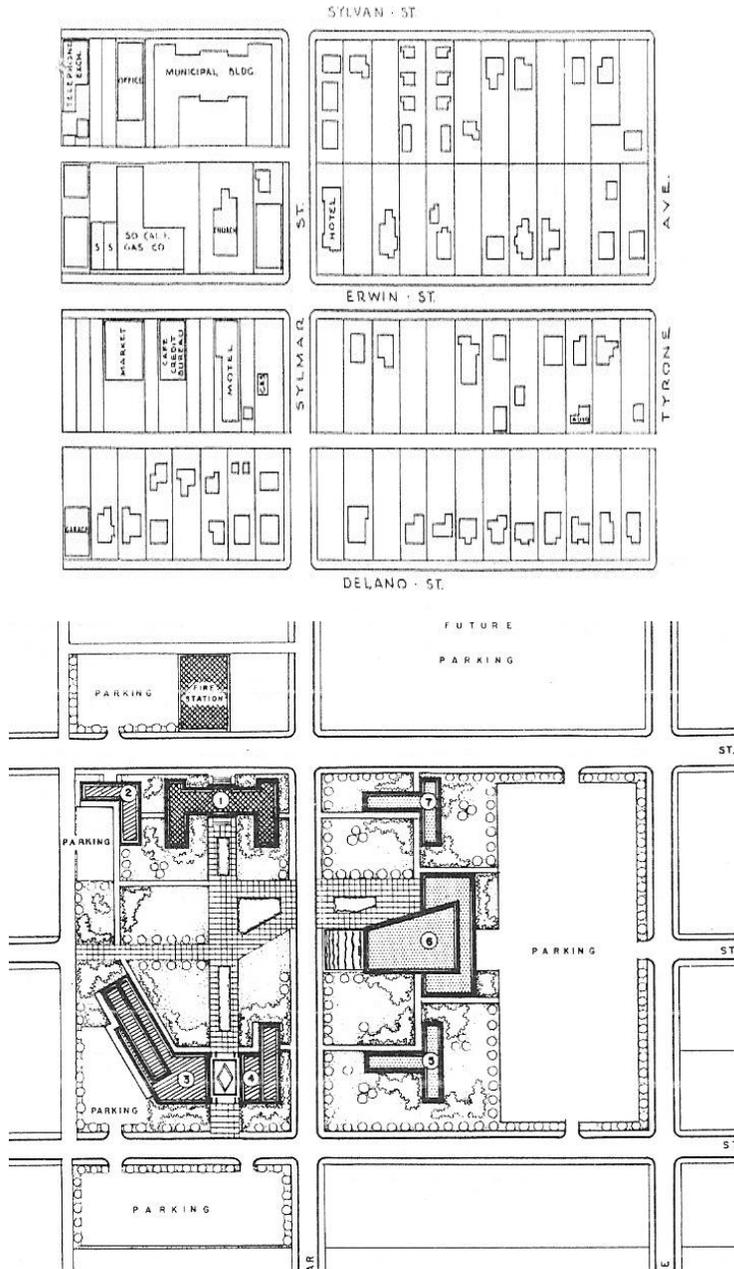
The result of this size and political complexity was that, like West Los Angeles, site planning lagged behind construction. Buildings went up and existing plans had to adjust to the ways in which they varied from what had been proposed. At the same time, decisions of the County, State, and Federal governments to change size, location and timetable caused delay. Only a small portion of the project – its far eastern end – had been completed by 1970. But this portion was indicative of what was to come by the time the ensemble finished its final major building in 2003.

Talk of an improved Valley Administrative Center began as early as 1946, and expansion of the existing Municipal Building was part of the unsuccessful 1947 bond issue. By 1950 the scheme for Van Nuys had evolved into the creation of a civic center which included the existing Municipal Building along with a City government annex; a Library and a Civic Auditorium; and County, State, and Federal Buildings. All would surround a new plaza south of the existing Municipal Building, created by closing Erwin Street. Surface parking was relegated to the rears of the new buildings.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Los Angeles City Planning Commission, “Branch Administrative Centers,” dated February 1950, 12-13; *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 1947, May 12, 1960

**SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement**  
**Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers, 1957-1970**



*Existing Conditions and Plan for the Valley Administrative Center, Van Nuys, 1950*  
*1-Municipal Building, 2-Federal Building, 3-Municipal Building Annex,*  
*4- County Building, 5-State Building, 6-Civic Auditorium, 7-Library*  
*From Los Angeles City Planning Commission "Branch Administrative Centers"*  
*(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

The forms and uses of the buildings changed over the next two decades, but the general scheme of a central plaza focused on the 1932 Municipal Building remained, as did the concept of parking around the periphery.

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The first new structure was a County Courthouse, completed in 1955. It was placed on axis with the Municipal Building but fronted on Delano Street and so turned its back to a future plaza. It was later demolished and replaced by the current Municipal Courts Building. In 1958 the City approved a site plan which incorporated this structure. It also altered the central plaza in a linear mall, by closing Sylvan as well as Erwin Street and extending the site to the west as far as Van Nuys Boulevard. Perhaps the most notable change in building use from the 1950 scheme was the substitution of a large Police facility in place of a Civic Auditorium.<sup>42</sup>



*Adapted Site Plan for Valley Branch Administrative Center, 1958  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)*

<sup>42</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1958, November 21, 1958, October 6, 1983.

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Notable about the 1958 plan, in contrast to both the 1950 scheme and to what eventually developed, is the regularity of the building masses and the symmetry of their placement in relation to each other. The axis of the east-west mall, from Van Nuys Boulevard through the center of the proposed Police building (7), is flanked by identical pairs of buildings – the City Hall Annex (4) and the County Building (10), the State Building (5) and a second County Building (9) and the City Public Health building (6) and the County Probation building (8). The two buildings that front onto Van Nuys Boulevard, the Library (3) and the Federal Building (11), present identical massing to the street. The assumed similarity of the paired buildings can be seen in the aerial rendering presented to the Mayor and the City Council in 1959.



*Presentation of Plan for new Valley Branch Administrative Center, 1959  
From left: City Councilman James Corman, President of Van Nuys Chamber of Commerce Robert Hale,  
Los Angeles Mayor Norris Poulson, and Planning Commission Member Nobert Moffa  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

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Political reality was such that construction began on individual buildings before Erwin and Sylmar Streets were closed and work on the mall begun. In 1959 planning commenced for the County Probation Department building, on a site different from that indicated on the plan, and for the Police Department, in the location indicated but with its own garage in the space set aside for public parking. In May of 1961 the Health Center went up in approximately the location indicated on the plan, but it faced Sylvan Street and had no relationship to the proposed mall.<sup>43</sup>



*Councilman Everett Burkhalter and Governor Edmond G. Brown, 1962  
Site of Library under construction, with Municipal Building in background  
Valley Administrative Center, Van Nuys  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

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<sup>43</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1959, September 13, 1959, November 29, 1959, May 21, 1961, March 25, 1962.



*Aerial view from the west, Valley Administrative Center, circa 1964  
Erwin Street is intact, ending at Police Building; police garage with roof vaults  
to its right is the Library in location of the proposed state building in 1958 plan  
(Los Angeles Public Library)*

The Police building – designed by Daniel Mann Johnson & Mendenhall and Larson Kahn & Farrell and completed in 1964 – fulfills its intended purpose as a monumental structure closing the future mall’s east-west axis. But the Library – also completed in 1964 and designed by Arbogast & Associates – was a significant deviation. The 1958 plan called for it to be placed at the southeast corner of Van Nuys Boulevard and Sylvan Street (3). Instead it took the place of the western half of the site called for a state building (5). It was essentially square in shape and its footprint bore no resemblance to any on the 1958 plan.<sup>44</sup>

Completion of the section east of the still intact Sylmar Street came with the construction of a new County Courts Building across from the Library, in the location (9) indicated for it on the 1958 plan. Designed by Joe Jordan and Leon Edgar, it rises seven stories to dominate both the four-story Police Building and low-rise Library. Its opening in the summer of 1967 coincided with completion of the first phase of the Mall. Erwin Street east of Sylmar had been vacated and construction had begun a year

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<sup>44</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, April 15, 1962, January 28, 1963, June 8, 1964, May 12, 1964.

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earlier, in the summer of 1966. The City worked together with the County to provide a plaza-like space that included grass and forty sweet gum trees, together with a trellised sun shelter.<sup>45</sup>

The opening in 1967 of the County Courts Building and the portion of the mall east of Sylmar Street was the last major development for the next eight years. By 1970, the end of the period of significance, the Valley Administrative Center had reached a point that its concept of a central space onto which civic buildings would face was clear. But the development of the section west of the still-intact Sylmar Street remained unfinished, with only the concept of an east-west mall and a plaza facing the rear of the 1932 Municipal Building assured.

The City had realized ten years earlier, in July of 1960 that a revision of the 1958 scheme was needed and recommended to the City Council that it allocate funds to draft a final site plan. A year later, in June of 1961, a rough sketch was published in the *Los Angeles Times*. It called for a Federal Building on the northwest corner of the completed Mall, at Sylvan and Van Nuys, and a matching State Building opposite it on the southwest corner, at Delano and Van Nuys. By January of 1964 the City felt confident enough to present a model, which included two identical masses for the State and Federal Buildings.<sup>46</sup>

Matters changed, as both the State and the Federal governments proceeded to construct buildings according to their own programs. The Federal Building was the first to be completed, in 1975. It was located on the site indicated in the 1958 plan (11) – rather than on the 1964 model – but was a complex of structures that occupied, as well, the space set aside for a county building (10). One of its segments fronted directly onto Van Nuys Boulevard in the manner of a commercial structure, rather than maintain a landscaped setback as called for in the 1958 plan.<sup>47</sup>

Second was the State Building, opened in 1984. Its size was such that Sacramento rejected any site along the mall and instead built on the southeast corner of Van Nuys Boulevard and Delano Street. The State Building occupied the entire block front from Delano south to Calvert. Like a portion of the Federal Building, it faced directly onto Van Nuys, without a setback.<sup>48</sup>

By that year, 1984, a final site plan was in place which recognized these developments. The City had originally adopted it in 1970 and then amended it to accommodate the Federal and State Buildings. This 1984 revision is essentially what exists today, with the new Municipal Courts Building and a new City Hall built where indicated. By the late 1980s the east-west walk officially had become the Erwin Street Pedestrian Mall.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 1964, January 24, 1965, July 14, 1966, November 20, 1966, July 12, 1967, September 10, 1967.

<sup>46</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1960, June 11, 1961, January 8, 1964.

<sup>47</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1986.

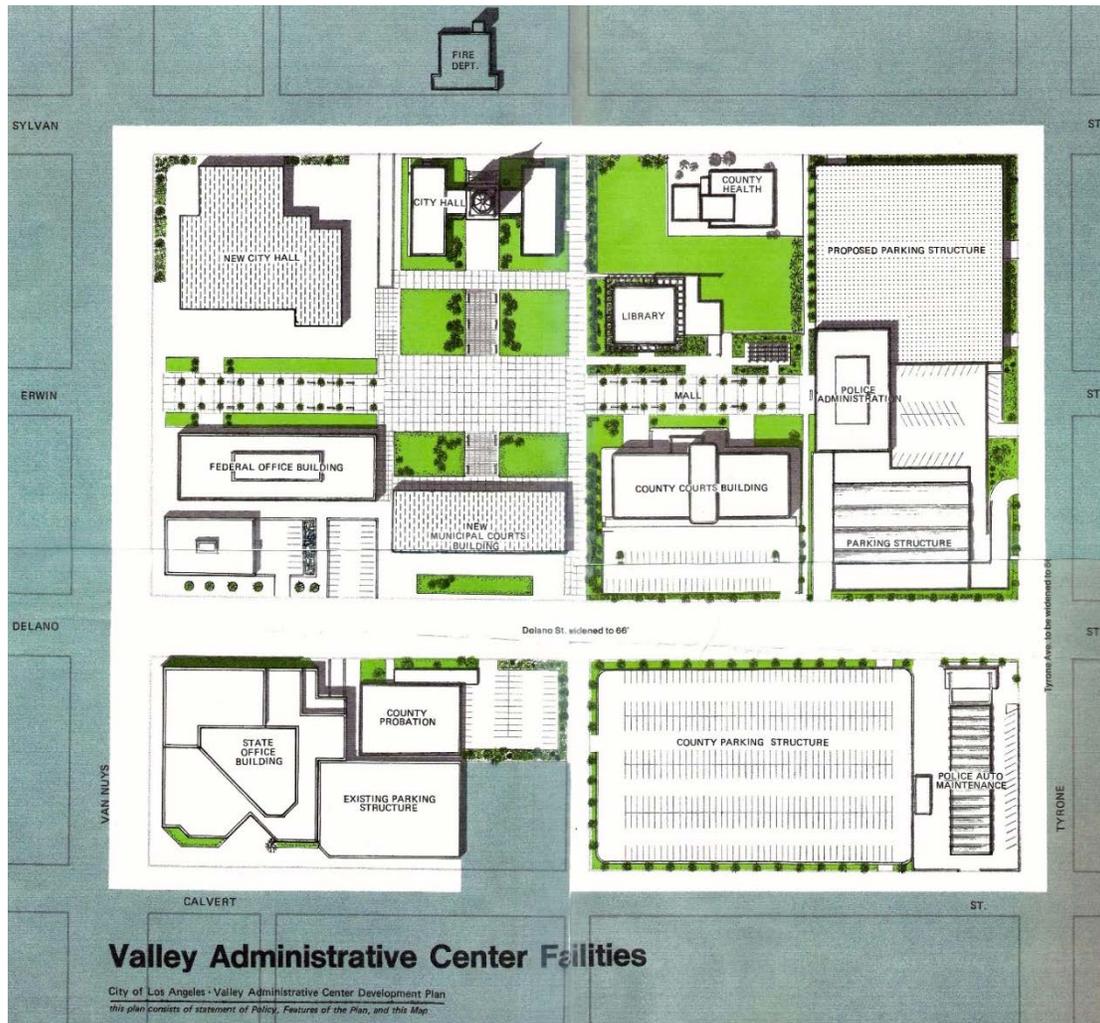
<sup>48</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1984.

<sup>49</sup> Los Angeles Department of City Planning, "Valley Administrative Center Development Plan," revised 1984; *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1986.

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The 1984 modification of the 1970 plan was significant in three ways. First it acknowledged that the original provision for surface parking, as specified in the 1958 plan, was inadequate and called instead for multi-level parking structures.<sup>50</sup> Second, it reinforced the idea of a central plaza on axis with the original rear of the 1932 Municipal Building by calling for a new Municipal Courts Building which, unlike the 1955 County Building it replaced, fronted onto the plaza. This new building – designed by Daniel Dworsky and controversial given its eleven-story height and bulky massing – opened in 1989.<sup>51</sup>



Site Plan for Valley Administrative Center, amended in 1970 and revised in 1984  
(Courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Planning)

<sup>50</sup> The inadequacy of surface parking had long been an issue. See *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1961, February 15, 1962. The city promised an alternative and beginning with the County Court Building in 1967, provision was made for either an adjacent multi-level parking structure and/or an underground parking garage. See *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1964, December 25, 1966, July 9, 1967, November 12, 1967.

<sup>51</sup> The design was originally rejected by staff of the Los Angeles Planning Commission, but the staff's recommendation was overridden by the Planning Commission, see *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1985. For the completion, see *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1989.



*View of rear of 1932 Municipal Building from front of 1989 Municipal Courts Building  
Valley Administrative Center, Van Nuys  
(Photo by author)*

Third, it called for a second Branch City Hall. This became a reality in 2003 and completed the Administrative Center as an ensemble of buildings around an open space. Known as the Marvin Braude San Fernando Valley Constituent Service Center, it is an L-shaped structure that fills the northwest corner. Designed in a Post-Modern style described by the *Los Angeles Times* as Mediterranean, it varies in height and massing and includes space for shops and restaurants along an arcade that faces Van Nuys Boulevard.<sup>52</sup>

The need for additional space provided by this building became acute after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake damaged the 1932 Municipal Building and sections had to be vacated until repaired. Councilman Marvin Braude, for whom the building was named, proposed in April of 1996 that the City enter into an agreement with a private developer who would build the facility on city land and then lease space to the City. In June of 1997 the City contracted with the Voit Company, a firm best known for its high-rise development in the Warner Center of Woodland Hills. The arrangement was finalized two years later, in July of 1999.<sup>53</sup>

Ground was broken for the new Constituent Service Center in June of 2001, and it was completed in May of 2003. Architectural features, along with the Van Nuys Boulevard shopping arcade, include a rotunda on the corner of Van Nuys and Sylvan, and a passage connecting the corner to the mall. It was designed to contain branch offices of the departments of Building and Safety, Planning, Public Works,

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<sup>52</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1999. The architect of record was John P. Grounds, from "Application for Building Permit," at Search Online Building Records at [www.ladbs.org](http://www.ladbs.org), accessed March 2019.

<sup>53</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, April 18, 1996, June 5, 1997, July 24, 1999.

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Fire, Street Maintenance, Finance, and Transportation, as well as offices for the local City Council member. It was accompanied by a 200-car underground garage.<sup>54</sup>



*Marvin Braude San Fernando Valley Constituent Service Center, 2003  
Van Nuys Boulevard façade, with passage to mall and shopping arcade  
Valley Administrative Center, Van Nuys  
(Photo by author)*

## CONCLUSION

The sub-theme of Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers should be considered in terms of both architecture and site planning.

The architecture of the postwar Branch City Halls reflects the general trends of the day rather than any particular form unique to government functions. Sunland-Tujunga and Reseda show the influence of the early Postwar Modernism of the late 1940s, as seen in the San Fernando County Civic Center with its asymmetrically arranged brick volumes, while Westchester reflects Midcentury Modernism with its simple massing and use of open-framed elements such as vaulted canopies.

In contrast, the larger West Los Angeles example shows the influence of the Fresno City Hall prototype, with a simple rectangular block intersected by an off-center entrance made monumental through its differentiation in scale and contrast in color and texture. At the same time, the use of concrete rather than brick and the vertical detailing around the windows identify it as a product of the late 1950s.

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<sup>54</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 2001, May 31, 2003.

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Notable about the site plans for the Administrative Centers are the degree to which they paralleled innovations in commercial site planning. In both case – governmental and commercial – the innovations came from the need to accommodate the automobile. This holds true for smaller linear as well as larger centralized Centers.

The small linear Administrative Centers resemble the early automobile-oriented shopping strips, in particular Wilshire Boulevard as it developed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The commercial buildings along Wilshire present a public face to the street and parking is placed in the rear or to the side. This was the form used for the smaller Administrative Centers, the only variation being the setback of the Centers, allowing for landscaping in front so as to fit their suburban settings.

The larger Administrative Centers, on the other hand, have come to resemble postwar shopping centers. Buildings face a central plaza or mall, and in turn present their rears to the periphery, where parking dominates, either by surface lots or multi-level structures. Only when underground parking is provided, as with the Braude Constituent Service Center, can a more urban relationship with the bordering street be established.

## **ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS**

<b>Summary Statement of Significance:</b>	Resources evaluated under this theme are examples of Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers. They are significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development. Some may also be significant in the area of Architecture. They show how the City planned for and provided buildings – Branch City Halls – in settings – administrative Centers – to extend municipal services into newly and rapidly populated areas during the post WWII period. Some buildings/centers are also excellent examples of modern architectural styles and the work of noted architects.
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	1957-1970
<b>Period of Significance Justification:</b>	The first postwar Branch City Halls were completed in 1957. The Administrative Centers, as ensembles combining Branch City Halls with other government buildings, were either completed by 1970 or had reached a state of development such that their future completion according to plan was assured.
<b>Geographic Location:</b>	Citywide, in outlying areas (known resources in Reseda, Sunland-Tujunga, Van Nuys, West Los Angeles, Westchester)
<b>Area of Significance:</b>	Community Planning and Development; Architecture
<b>Criteria:</b>	NR: A/C                      CR: 1/3                      Local: 1/3
<b>Associated Property Type:</b>	Institutional—Government, Branch City Hall/Administrative Center
<b>Property Type Description:</b>	Free-standing building housing city government offices, in a complex containing separate structures for other government functions.
<b>Property Type Significance:</b>	See Summary Statement of Significance above.

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### **Post WWII Branch City Halls and Administrative Centers, 1957-1970**

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#### **Eligibility Standards:**

- A single branch city hall/municipal building or an administrative center which is part of a complex with buildings housing multiple functions and services
- Developed as part of an overall City planning program to expand government services and make them accessible to outlying areas
- Constructed during the period of significance

#### **Character Defining/Associative Features;**

- Retains sufficient integrity to convey significance
- Shaped by need to accommodate the automobile, given the suburban settings
- Part of a complex which may include a library, police station, fire station and/or community center
- Complex may also include County, State, and/or Federal offices
- May also be significant under a Modernism theme with the Architecture and Engineering context
- May also include significant landscape features and designs such as malls and plazas
- For the National Register, a property must possess exceptional significance if less than 50 years of age

#### **Integrity Considerations:**

- Should retain integrity of Design, Feeling, Location, Materials, and Association

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Los Angeles City Planning Commission, "Branch Administrative Centers," dated February 1950. A copy of the report is in the reference collection of the Social Science division of the Central Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library.

Various documents from the files of the Los Angeles Department of City Planning.